



Senate

General Assembly

File No. 621

January Session, 2015

Substitute Senate Bill No. 1103

Senate, April 13, 2015

The Committee on Education reported through SEN. SLOSSBERG of the 14th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the Senate, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

AN ACT CONCERNING SCHOOL DISTRICTS OF INNOVATION.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2015*) (a) For the school year
2 commencing July 1, 2015, and each school year thereafter, the
3 Commissioner of Education shall establish and administer a school
4 districts of innovation program for any local or regional board of
5 education that develops creative approaches to addressing issues and
6 challenges related to the provision of education in the public schools,
7 including, but not limited to, improving school climate and reducing
8 school bullying. Under such program, the State Board of Education
9 may waive any provision of title 10 of the general statutes, or
10 regulations adopted by the State Board of Education pursuant to said
11 title, except that the State Board of Education shall not waive any
12 provision of sections 10-14n, 10-15, 10-16, 10-16b, 10-153a to 10-153t,
13 inclusive, and 10-221a of the general statutes or any requirement of
14 federal law.

15 (b) (1) A local or regional board of education may submit an

16 application for participating in the program at such time and in such
17 manner as the commissioner prescribes. Such application shall include,
18 but need not be limited to, (A) a plan that provides a description of the
19 proposed approach to be taken by such local or regional board of
20 education to address a specific issue or challenge, (B) the proposed
21 outcome of such approach, (C) methods for assessing the impact of
22 participating in the program, (D) any community partners that will be
23 involved in the implementation of such approach, and (E) the specific
24 statutory or regulatory provisions that such board is seeking
25 permission to be waived.

26 (2) The commissioner shall review each application for participation
27 in the program and may recommend approval of the plan proposed by
28 a local or regional board of education to the State Board of Education.
29 The State Board of Education may approve such plan and waive the
30 appropriate statutory or regulatory requirements. Such waiver shall be
31 valid for three years and may be renewed by the State Board of
32 Education upon a demonstration of success by the local or regional
33 board of education.

34 (c) Any local or regional board of education participating in such
35 program shall partner with a public institution of higher education to
36 implement the plan and analyze such implementation. Such public
37 institution of higher education shall provide instruction in best
38 practices and research-based methodology to assist such local or
39 regional board of education in the implementation of such plan.

40 (d) Any local or regional board of education participating in the
41 program shall (1) submit to the Department of Education (A) annual
42 progress reports relating to the implementation of such plan; and (B) a
43 final report relating to the results of such plan at the conclusion of
44 participation in the program or prior to an application for renewal of
45 the waiver, (2) share such results with other local or regional boards of
46 education, and (3) if such plan is successful, provide instruction and
47 training to other local and regional boards of education on such plan.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
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Section 1	<i>July 1, 2015</i>	New section
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Statement of Legislative Commissioners:

In Section 1(a), text at the end of the second sentence was moved to the first sentence for clarity.

ED*Joint Favorable Subst.*

The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact:

Agency Affected	Fund-Effect	FY 16 \$	FY 17 \$
Education, Dept.	GF - Cost	Potential	Potential
Board of Regents for Higher Education; UConn	GF - Cost	Potential	Potential

Note: GF=General Fund

Municipal Impact:

Municipalities	Effect	FY 16 \$	FY 17 \$
Local and Regional School Districts	Cost/Savings	Potential	Potential

Explanation

This bill requires the education commissioner to establish and administer a “school districts of innovation program” for the 2015-16 school year and subsequent school years. The bill does not specify if the State Department of Education (SDE) is responsible for funding the innovation program. If SDE has to fund the program, they would incur a cost. The cost of the program is unknown, as the bill does not require local or regional boards of education to participate.

To the extent that a local or regional board of education chooses to participate, the fiscal impact is uncertain as any costs could be offset by corresponding savings, associated with a three-year waiver of statutory requirements or regulations (with some exceptions) to local or regional boards of education that develop creative approaches to addressing issues and challenges related to public school education, including improving school climate and reducing school bullying.

The bill requires boards of education that participate in the

program to partner with a public higher education institution to implement the plan and analyze its implementation. This could result in a potential cost to the Board of Regents or the University of Connecticut.

The Out Years

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would continue into the future subject to inflation.

OLR Bill Analysis**sSB 1103*****AN ACT CONCERNING SCHOOL DISTRICTS OF INNOVATION.*****SUMMARY:**

This bill requires the education commissioner to establish and administer a “school districts of innovation program” for the 2015-16 school year and subsequent school years. The program allows the State Board of Education (SBE) to grant a three-year waiver of statutory requirements or regulations (with some exceptions) to local or regional boards of education that develop creative approaches to addressing issues and challenges related to public school education, including improving school climate and reducing school bullying.

Under the bill, a board of education that wishes to participate in the program may submit an application to the education commissioner at a time and in a manner that she determines. The bill lists specific information the application must contain, including a plan describing the board’s intended approach to address a specific education issue or challenge.

It also allows the commissioner to review each application and recommend application plans to SBE for approval. SBE has the authority under the bill to (1) approve plans, (2) grant a three-year waiver of appropriate statutes or regulations, and (3) renew the waiver if the applicant board demonstrates success with its plan.

The bill requires boards of education that participate in the program to partner with a public higher education institution to implement the plan and analyze its implementation. The institution must provide the board with instruction in best practices and research-based methodology to help with the plan’s implementation.

Lastly, the bill imposes reporting and interdistrict collaboration requirements on boards of education participating in the program.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2015

WAIVER OF STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

The bill allows SBE to waive statutes in Title 10 or related agency regulations under Title 10; however, it prohibits waiver of any federal law requirements and certain state statutes. The state statutes that are ineligible for waiver govern:

1. the statewide mastery examination,
2. municipalities' obligation to maintain public schools serving grades kindergarten through 12,
3. the required 180-day school year length,
4. required courses of study in public schools,
5. teachers' collective bargaining rights, and
6. high school graduation requirements.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

A board of education's program application must include:

1. a plan that describes the applicant board's intended approach to address a specific issue or challenge,
2. the proposed outcome of the approach,
3. methods to assess the impact of program participation,
4. community partners who will be involved in the approach implementation, and
5. the specific statutes or regulations from which the board is requesting a waiver.

REPORTING AND INTERDISTRICT COLLABORATION

The bill requires any board of education that participates in the program to submit to the State Department of Education (1) annual progress reports on plan implementation and (2) a final report relating to plan results when the program concludes or before the board applies for a waiver renewal.

Additionally, the bill requires participating boards to engage in interdistrict collaboration by (1) sharing results with other local or regional boards of education and (2) providing instruction and training to such boards about their plan, if it proves to be a successful one.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Education Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 33 Nay 0 (03/25/2015)